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Resilience and unemployment: A case study of East German women

Vanessa Beck, Debbie Wagener and Jonathan Grix

Abstract

Unemployment is one of the key issues in German politics today. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the former East Germany. This paper examines the impact that this exceptionally high unemployment in the new German states has had on East German women since reunification. It reflects, in particular, on the potential influence of their experience of life in the GDR in developing coping strategies to deal with the effects of unemployment, an ongoing resistance to unemployment and, most significantly, to a male-breadwinner ethos.

Unemployment in the East since unification

Unemployment is an important topic in Germany today. A national average of over 11 per cent of the potential workforce is without employment and discussions abound about the rigidity of the German labour market.¹ In comparison, little has been written on the consequences of unemployment and the coping strategies developed by the unemployed in dealing with their situation. In particular, women have not been the focus of such studies, although many would suggest that this social group bore the brunt of the fall-out from the unification process, especially given the decline in female employment in the east. In 1989, 91.2 per cent of the female population of working age either worked or were apprentices or students.² In 1990 the employment quota was down to 82 per cent and in 2002 stood at 73 per cent³ with female unemployment increasing throughout the same period.⁴

Paradoxically, perhaps, it is East German women who have proved to be most resilient to the turmoil brought about by the social and economic transformation of unification - in part, as we shall show, due to their socialisation in the German Democratic Republic (GDR), their reliance on the support of solid social networks and family ties and, finally, their reluctance to accept the configuration of the male breadwinner model dominant in the (West) German labour market.

Unemployment rates in the new states have remained high since German unification in 1990 and have, in part, even increased. Approximately 20 per cent of those available for work in East Germany are unemployed but the real figure, including hidden unemployment, could be nearer 25 per cent.⁵ Unemployment rates have generally been higher for women than for men, particularly in the first 6-7 years of unification when women comprised two-thirds of the unemployed ([Table 1](#)).⁶

UNEMPLOYMENT RATES IN GERMANY Table 1

	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	Jan 02	Jan 03	Jan 04
<i>Sources:</i> 1991-98 WSI FrauenDatenReport, CD-Rom © edition sigma. 2002-04 Statistisches Bundesamt Deutschland, http://www.destatis.de .											
Germany	7.3	8.5	9.8	10.6	10.4	11.5	12.7	12.3	10.4	11.1	11.0
New Länder	10.3	14.8	15.8	16.0	14.9	16.7	19.5	19.5	18.7	19.5	19.1
Women (Germany)	8.5	10.2	11.3	12.0	11.4	12.1	13.3	12.8	10.6	11.1	10.9
Women (East)	12.3	19.6	21.0	21.5	19.3	19.9	22.5	21.8	19.5	19.9	19.5
Men (Germany)	6.4	7.1	8.6	9.5	9.6	11.0	12.2	11.9	12.2	13.4	13.4
Men (East)	8.5	10.5	11.0	10.9	10.7	13.7	16.6	17.4	21.1	22.5	22.0

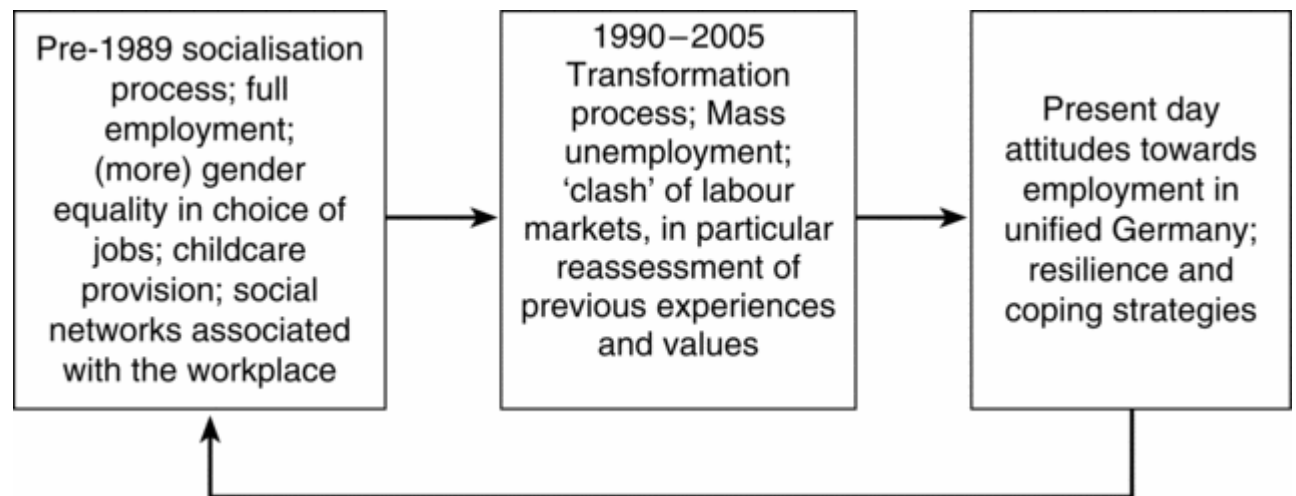
High unemployment is a serious problem for many states (Germany has the joint third highest level of unemployment in the EU⁷), but it has a particular resonance for people who had, until 1989, experienced almost full employment. East German women, in particular, had a very different experience of employment to West European women, given the exceptionally high level of female employment in the GDR. The specific German context thus provides a justification to focus exclusively on East German women's unemployment.

This paper intends to examine the effects of this past experience on East German women's ability to find strategies to overcome current unemployment. We look to:

1. socialisation factors in the GDR which affect East German women's attitudes to unemployment in post-unified Germany;
2. East German women's strategies for coping with long-term unemployment;
and
3. East German women's strategies for staying in work.

Although some of this covers old ground, empirical material is used to add texture to the familiar picture and to tease out some of the more subtle developments with regard to strategies leading out of unemployment. The article draws on extensive empirical data derived from interviews undertaken by two of the authors in Saxony Anhalt during 1999-2000.⁸ Despite having the dubious distinction of the consistently highest unemployment rate among the new states, the trends we trace in Saxony Anhalt can be extrapolated to the other East German states. As an organising principle, we employ an adapted version of the simple schema of 'reflexive attitude formation' outlined by Grix in this journal.⁹ Basically, experiences and values shaped by pre-1989 socialisation in the GDR - and, in our case, those linked specifically to employment - are 'filtered' through the process of transformation (that is, 1990-2005), and are then reassessed and redefined in light of the new situation. For example, to fully understand the impact of unemployment on East Germans, we need to consider the nature of work and the workplace in the GDR. It is the experience associated with close to full employment, a semblance of gender equality at the workplace and the social aspect of working relations that is thrown into sharp relief against the backdrop of sudden and mass unemployment in the post-unity transformation process. The combination of past experiences and their reassessment in the light of the difficult

transformation process have resulted in the attitudes towards unemployment expressed by East German women today and the coping strategies they have developed to deal with it (see [Figure 1](#) for an overview).



[\[Enlarge Image\]](#)

Figure 1. REFLEXIVE ATTITUDE FORMATION AMONG EAST GERMAN WOMEN

Attitudes towards employment among East German women are not, as may have been expected, aligning themselves to those of their counterparts in the west.¹⁰ On the contrary, as we show below, past experiences penetrate and shape present attitudes towards work and the strategies developed to cope with its loss. [Figure 1](#) attempts to capture the circular relationship between past socialisation experiences filtered through the unique event of unification and its ramifications for present day attitudes. Almost all of the interviewees used in the studies upon which this article is based drew upon values shaped in the past when articulating their attitudes towards work and unemployment today.

Attitudes to female employment in the GDR

Previous research clearly shows the impact of past socialisation on present day attitudes.¹¹ Of particular significance in the relatively monolithic political environment of the GDR was the governing communist ideology and its impact on lifestyles. The regime subscribed to Marx and Engels' claim that the system of capitalism provided the material base for patriarchy.¹² Engels considered that 'the first condition for the liberation of women was to bring the whole female sex back into public industry'.¹³ The SED embedded these principles into its society and its legislation. East German women were expected to work full-time. A considerable volume of legislation was passed, promoting the education and training of women to similar levels as men and providing a range of special systems and grants to enable them to pursue qualifications while starting a family.¹⁴ Employers were also obliged to enter into contracts with women, guaranteeing employment according to qualifications gained during training periods and quotas were set in all branches of

industry.¹⁵ These policies were then backed up with an impressive range of laws to further support working mothers, such as highly subsidised, 24-hour childcare, shorter working hours and possibilities for leave to look after sick children.

The success of this multi-pronged approach and the state's industry-based policy focus was clearly visible in the statistics on female employment at the time of unification. Over 90 per cent of East German women were employed or studying, with greater representation in a larger number of fields and at higher levels than in the west.¹⁶ Furthermore, almost 90 per cent of women had vocational qualifications¹⁷ compared to just 60 per cent in the west,¹⁸ and over 25 per cent of women had qualifications in technical areas.¹⁹ East German women also made up 50 per cent of employees in the chemical and electronics sectors²⁰ and 40 per cent of those holding the highest 'Master' level of vocational qualification compared to just 8 per cent in the west.²¹ Of particular significance was the relatively high number of women in management posts, at 30 per cent, compared to just 10 per cent in the west.²² There were negative aspects to this situation as many women would have liked, for example, to have worked less, to have had longer maternity leave periods and were not necessarily able to choose employment situations that suited them individually. Nevertheless, East German women did have a range of opportunities and a level of independence and acceptance in society that far exceeded the situation in the west.

Work in the GDR was understood by the vast majority of interviewees as taken for granted, 'it just didn't occur to us not to go to work'.²³ Frequent mention was made of the positive aspects in their working lives. For example, a factory worker described her work as 'great fun and ...something we really wanted to do'. This was supported by the majority of interviewees, who despite the dual burden and long hours, did not view themselves as having been exploited or simply used as workhorses. For them 'being able to achieve everything enhanced [their] well-being'. They 'were able to realise [their] identity ...and to fully develop [their] potential'. 'You had the feeling in the GDR that your achievements were being recognised, that you would be promoted and that you would be able to achieve a level of emancipation ...women had the feeling they were needed' (E).

The use of the term 'emancipation' is interesting here as the meaning associated, as described below, is distinct from a Western reading. Interviewees thus spoke proudly about what they felt were East German women's achievements; the 'normality of women driving cranes or welding' and the 'high number of women in senior positions', particularly 'in middle management [who] were more confident and had more sense of self-worth'. They also generally felt more involved in society as a whole so that 'women would discuss political issues with one another'. A majority also describe an increase in status in the family, which related to greater financial independence free of 'rows about a new haircut or a new dress' as well as a move towards greater equality in the division of household duties. It simply became necessary that the husband participated more as it 'just couldn't work any other way'. Although women would still bear the brunt of housework responsibilities, there was a clear development towards an increase in male participation and support in domestic duties.²⁴ Subconsciously at least, East German women have not only come to view work as the end but also as a means of gaining an emancipation of sorts, in that they clearly link it to other improvements they experienced in terms of independence, status and self-esteem.

This is indicative of a female work ethic which, whilst linked to the SED's Marxist feminism, clearly relates strongly to a personal need to work.

There is significant evidence of a unique relationship to paid employment amongst East German women which is likely to be the source of their attitudes towards mass unemployment since unification.²⁵ Such a relationship is less visible in the lower female employment rate in the west, where women tend to be more critical of 'women trying to emulate men'²⁶ and 'adapting to men's professions whilst remaining mother and wife at home'.²⁷

East German attitudes towards unemployment post-unity

Such attitudes towards work developed throughout the life of the GDR and impact on the way in which East German women view the seismic changes to their biographies since 1989. Just as work was highly valued, so unemployment is strongly rejected. The following quotes highlight some pertinent aspects of East German women's well established work motivation and negative reaction to joblessness.

It's not only the financial side but there is also a considerable psychological burden, as we are just not used to not working. I'm a career women and I cannot come to terms with this rut that I'm stuck in. It's just impossible to bear. (L)

I fell into a really deep hole. I delivered newspapers and my husband sold insurance. I constantly had tears in my eyes. We just couldn't face not working. (E)

Unemployed interviewees experience rejection, 'feel that they are no longer needed by society', and 'no longer feel of value'. Others describe it as the 'complete loss of their identity and their well-being'.²⁸ 'I've got no role any more, I belong to the job centre so I'm not free. I want a job as I am something then but now I am nothing' (B). Where they had enjoyed social contact at work, many unemployed interviewees now feel 'pushed out and lonely' as they find themselves without the automatic links into a range of groups that the workplace had provided. Some describe common responses to unemployment such as isolation and alienation. Unemployment can come to be seen as an affliction, a state which renders people helpless, as one interviewee recalled: 'I just can't be happy with this unemployment. It's all I can think about. I want to provide for my child but I can't get a job. There's such a sense of helplessness, such a sense of bitterness. I cannot come to terms with it' (M).

East German attitudes towards the 'full-time mother role' as a potential (western) alternative to employment or indeed to unemployment have also tended to be more negative than in the west. Unemployed women describe this role as 'second class to working in every way' using adjectives such as 'isolating, limiting and even degrading'.²⁹ A 1993 survey indicated that only 3 per cent of the East German female unemployed would be happy to simply have a housewife role,³⁰ increasing to 10 per cent by the year 2000.³¹ Unemployed women attempting to adapt to a daily routine

with or without children describe intense difficulties and even despair at the changes it involves:

The constant whining just drives me to distraction ...My mother worked too. I've just got no role-model of a full-time mother. I am not a housewife. I clean the house but that's just occupational therapy. I feel so lonely. I only do it for the family. When I was working doing the housework was easy but like this it's so tiring. (B)

Unemployment thus has considerable but distinct effects for women of all ages. Older women can find it difficult to maintain their self-respect when there is little hope for any reintegration into the job market. 'Older' can include women as young as 45, who find it 'incomprehensible that they are not needed, just when their children are grown up and they have more time for work'. Women, in what should be the prime of their working lives, are under more pressure to find a way back into employment to secure their livelihood and future pension entitlements. Even young women who did not experience full socialisation in the GDR have high work motivation, possibly due to secondary socialisation in the aftermath of unification.[32](#)

Coping strategies

Paradoxically perhaps, those often described as the 'losers' of the unification process appear to have utilised their former experience of, and values towards, work in order to mobilise a resilient response to unemployment uncharacteristic of West German women. There are two essential strands that we will outline in the following: learning to live with long-term unemployment and finding work. Common to all strategies, however, is the ability to continue or replace latent aspects of work, which requires self-motivation and determination, not characteristics traditionally associated with the unemployed. Basically, what is required is a desire 'to beat unemployment by continuing to get up in the morning'.

Coping with unemployment via social networks

Essential to coping with unemployment is beating the isolation that is a stereotypical consequence of unemployment. This can be done via local social networks which have been shown to be stronger in East Germany than West, as the legacy of the *Nischengesellschaft* (society of niches) seems to have withstood the unification process.[33](#) Personal and informal networks had a key position in the GDR and were less individualised than in the west.[34](#) The high degree of distrust of state institutions and the heavy reliance on immediate social networks is even considered to be part of a specific eastern identity.[35](#)

As the unemployed do not have an organised, let alone national, lobby, local social networks are vital to avoid isolation. These contacts are informal, involve no bureaucracy, are easily mobilised and can provide a sense of solidarity.[36](#) According to a senior labour market advisor, up to 80 per cent of the work she does with her

unemployed clients is establishing a range of such connections. Within these networks both the quality and the amount of contacts is clearly of importance, with the latter also being a factor influencing the probability of re-employment.³⁷ One example of a 'top-down' attempt at stimulating communication among the unemployed are established women's groups and networks.

Well, I think our task, and that is what we try to do with the women, is that we try to strengthen their self-confidence, their personality, so that they get to know people and get out amongst people. And when making acquaintances, new areas open up and they start thinking about what else they could do. (P)

In Saxony Anhalt in 2000 there were approximately 70 'Frauenkommunikationszentren' (women's communication centres)³⁸ which provided a variety of creative and sporting activities as well as discussion groups and advice on a range of issues relating to finding work and claiming unemployment benefits. Particularly significant was that 24 such centres existed in just one region, Aschersleben, where the 'Gleichstellungsbeauftragte' (Equal Opportunities Officer) had prioritised local women's need for contact outside the home in an essentially rural area.

Women's and community centres have a range of functions. Apart from their official provisions, they can be meeting points for the unemployed where contacts can be made and free time and energy be invested. Unemployed women's groups can establish themselves within the framework of such centres. They undoubtedly promote the establishment of more or less informal networks. One group related how they had established a communication system whereby those among them who were going through bad phases and/or were depressed would be phoned on a regular basis to check up on them. What is less clear-cut and under-researched is the role women's and community centres play in equipping women to find employment. As will be shown in the following, there are indications that attending courses and making new contacts can increase the likelihood of finding employment but these narratives deserve more attention and detailed investigation.

Despite the importance and often popularity of women's and community centres, they are by no means secure or established institutions. One women's centre employee interviewed in 1998 suggested that 'as soon as they find out that such institutions as ours are not funded by the state anymore in the west, they will go in the same direction here'. The budgetary squeeze is taking effect in most of the new regions, as in Germany as a whole, which indicates that unemployed women may be losing more formal support structures as well as meeting spaces for informal support groups.

Informal social networks can also be established in many active labour market measures, qualification measures and other groups or associations. Further education, in particular, is seen to have significant effects in reversing isolation brought on by unemployment.³⁹ Interviewees indicated that going on courses equalled gaining contacts, some of which turned into close friendships and that information about job offers was shared through such interaction. In doing so, there was no competition between the participants but rather encouragement to exchange and pool experience and strategies in the struggle for jobs on the labour market. One woman recalled how,

on an accounting course, she learnt how to apply for jobs and about employment practices from other participants and their experience.

And then I did an accounting course to freshen up [my knowledge]. And personally, as I took part, that was much more meaningful. It really gave me something, also in terms of practical experience. Yes, what others told me about their work experience, and experience with applications, some had worked in companies after the Wende and could bring across their experience, which I then appropriated because I didn't have anything. (Q)

Women are also able to keep up to date with the latest regulations and requirements of the labour market, for example, by helping each other with new IT developments. Service providers are aware of the effectiveness of these networks for the unemployed, but active labour market measures paid for by the job centre are judged, and therefore funded, according to the success rate of placements in the first labour market. Networks are therefore not on their lists of priorities. One could argue, however, that networks, and with them most women's and community centres, function on a number of levels: first, (limited) re-employment is gained through information gleaned from networks (see also the next section on 'finding employment'); second, and perhaps in the long term more importantly, networks provide a support mechanism for coping with unemployment, alleviating isolation and the possible negative effects for wider society.

Women in particular attempt to use their contacts, memberships in associations and participation in events to learn about employment opportunities - whether this means a second labour market scheme, part-time work or full-time employment. Above all, unemployed women cherish the opportunity to talk to other women or exchange opinions and concerns. Although it would be too simplistic to regard women as better copers, experts stated that men had more problems in dealing with unemployment, as 'they felt personally disrespected' and did not know what to do at home. Conversely, women usually compensate for the lack of employment better because they utilise multi-layered systems of friendships, contacts and social interaction as building blocks of their identity. In addition, some of the flexibility required to run a household during GDR times is also a useful resource when dealing with unemployment.

One interviewee stated that in the past she was more creative and used far more self-initiative because the supply of consumer goods was sparse, unpredictable and of low quality. Interviewees reported that in the GDR citizens had to 'make something out of nothing'. Mutual learning processes occurred as ideas and practices were passed down from parents and shared with colleagues. Effective resources to cope with unemployment are thus built on the experiences of the GDR and of the social transformation process, in which women have seen their role change dramatically. Irrespective of the evaluation of the importance of employment in their life plans and as a social function, East German women interviewed relied on social contacts and networks as support mechanisms within and outside the workplace.

Finding employment

Although some East German women have had to come to terms with unemployment, the majority have continued to resist it strongly. They have earned themselves the title of the 'arbeitsame Ostfrauen', as many have refused to bow to the common social expectation that they should return to the home and stop 'exacerbating the unemployment figures'.[40](#)

As in the adaptation process, social networks are again an important aspect of gaining a foothold back in the job market. Although the unemployed have to register with the labour exchange for financial and administrative reasons there is usually little hope of finding a job through this channel. The labour exchange is thought to be only the fifth or sixth most useful source when searching for a job. Hahn and Schön found that the unemployed tend to trust individual applications (such as random applications or contacts to firms) and tips or contacts gained from friends and family members (80 and 90 per cent respectively). Only approximately 40 per cent of the unemployed hope to find a job through the labour exchange.[41](#) The most important means of finding out about employment opportunities are one's immediate circle of friends, the family, and, in some specific cases, providers of second labour market measures who have good connections to potential employers. The majority of interviewees spoke of the importance of networks in acquiring knowledge about vacancies and, subsequently, getting a job. Connections to both people in work and the fellow unemployed are therefore important and can provide significant support.[42](#)

East German women's tenacity in staying on the job market is also shown in a variety of other strategies. Thus statistics reveal a high level of re-training amongst women, in particular their participation in job creation schemes.[43](#) Amongst interviewees in Magdeburg, over half those working had undertaken major retraining in order to take up a second profession. Indeed, many had pursued extensive careers of training, retraining and work experience. Several interviewees described 'a regular rotation from unemployment to training or a new course and back to ABM' (R).[44](#) The depressing fact of never utilising newly acquired knowledge and not practising in the profession are part of the negative consequences of such employment biographies.

These so-called ABM careers are a common experience for the majority of unemployed who are desperately attempting to remain either in the labour market itself or as close to it as possible. In addition to the negative psychological consequences, these 'ABM careers' are usually accompanied by a downward financial cycle as entitlements are calculated on the basis of previous income.[45](#) Moreover, employers are sceptical when it comes to employing individuals who have a whole range of qualifications but have never worked in any field relating to their often varied abilities. Part of the capitalist logic - though not of the current labour market dynamic - is to assume that there is something wrong with an applicant who has been out of work, has changed occupations and/or has not had practical experience in the fields of employment.

Part of this drive to re-train is a movement away from industries that were established and successful in the GDR. Many interviewees previously had vocations as engineers or agricultural workers and had been prepared to give these up to do desk jobs. East German women are also more likely than men to accept a level of demotion rather than not work.[46](#) In this connection, women have also tended to become less adventurous in their career choice, with the result that East German women's

representation in technical and more advanced areas of education and training has been falling sharply, resulting in greater polarisation in male and female career opportunities when compared to pre-unification times.⁴⁷ This is a disappointing development for a number of reasons, not least because women's choices have been restricted and women who previously enjoyed working in certain male-dominated occupations were displaced from their workplaces. More generally speaking, the re-segregation of the East German labour market⁴⁸ has been problematic for women because the western tradition is to push them into service sector employment, an area which is underdeveloped in Germany and in the east in particular.

A further strategy to find employment has been to move to a different location, in many cases the west. Saxony Anhalt's population has been in almost continuous decline since the early 1990s. It can be assumed that this population loss includes those amongst the unemployed whose personal situation makes it possible for them to move to areas where they are more likely to find a job.⁴⁹ A surprisingly high number of East German women are also demonstrating that they are prepared to leave their home state in order to find work. In Saxony Anhalt the number of women, particularly younger women, leaving the state has been increasing since the late 1990s. In some years more women have left than men and the deficit between female emigration and immigration in Saxony Anhalt has been approximately double the male figure.⁵⁰ Significantly, recent research into the reasons given for considering emigration indicates that women appear to be primarily motivated by the need to find work, whereas there is evidence of more varied motivation amongst men. Conversely, 90 per cent of women in the study stated that they would not leave Saxony Anhalt if they had work, and this figure increased with age.⁵¹ Clearly, the net loss of female citizens, primarily of child-bearing age, has significant implications for the already marked decline in the birth rate⁵² and there is growing concern in the new states as to how this can be addressed.

It is then a considerable testimony to East German women's determination to remain in employment that they can also demonstrate relative success in staying in work. There is still a difference of around 20 per cent between the employment rates of East and West German women and even higher differences of around 32 per cent have been recorded for working mothers. East-west differences are furthermore highlighted by the hours worked, for example by mothers: 71 per cent of married mothers in the east work full-time, the corresponding figure for the west is 34 per cent.⁵³ There is pressure, particularly from western employers, to reassert a male breadwinner ethos⁵⁴ and to encourage women to 'quit the field, as increasing affluence lessens the need to contribute to the family finances'.⁵⁵ Despite this, the female employment rate began rising again in the new states at the end of the 1990s.⁵⁶ In fact, rather than leading to an increase in affluence, it has been shown that reliance on social benefits in the east is lower than in the west because of the higher employment participation of women.⁵⁷ Women's attempts to re-enter the labour market are therefore an essential part of maintaining living standards in the east. Access to training schemes and communication with like-minded individuals has been greatly facilitated by the role of social networks, a resource that this research found central to coping with unemployment and with attempting to re-enter the labour market.

Conclusions

This paper has outlined East German women's experience on the German labour market since unification and has set these in relation to their socialisation in the GDR. To some extent, it has described contrary trends. On the one hand there is the continuously high unemployment which has severe and negative effects on a population for which, until 1989, employment was taken for granted. For women the developments have been all the more significant because they include a shift away from a weak towards a strong male breadwinner model. On the other hand, East German women have shown considerable resilience in insisting on their inclusion in the labour market and have withstood (western) pressure to withdraw from the labour market. There is even an underlying trend that despite unemployment East German women demonstrated a high level of determination and resourcefulness to the extent that they no longer comprise two-thirds of the unemployed. Throughout the paper it has been shown that female networking is a striking example of the use of GDR as well as transformation experiences that aid the development of successful coping strategies in times of unemployment, as well as improving the chances of re-entry into the labour market.

East German women's attempts to remain in or re-enter the labour market are thus central to the continuation of East German lifestyles and employment choices. The effort necessary to maintain such a position is visible in the extent to which unemployment and insecurity in employment currently overshadow East German society and depends, above all, on a personal conviction of wanting to work. It is this *personal* conviction which could then prove to be East German women's most powerful tool in coping with, and working against, unemployment. Hildegard Maria Nickel terms this phenomenon East German women's 'resistivity' and asks whether it is simply a 'temporary aberrance' which will vanish with the new generation or whether the 'eastern model' could, in fact, shape the future for western men and women.⁵⁸ Our evidence suggests that the resilience of East German women in the face of unemployment and their strong commitment to entering the labour market are factors that will characterise this particular cohort for many years to come.

The key question remains whether East German women will be able to continue bridging the increasingly problematic gap between their individual choices and the combined pressure of high unemployment and more traditional gender roles in West Germany.

Appendix

Key to interviewees

- (A) Equal opportunities officers for Salzwedel, 45 years and 41 years.
- (B) Unemployed, 46 years.
- (C) Members of the ÖTV Unemployed Committee, Unemployed, 25-45 years.
- (D) MP for the PDS and Women's Representative in the HBV Union, 52 years.

- (E) Unemployed/retired, 62 years.
- (F) Building engineer, 45 years.
- (G) Women's representative for the ÖTV, 47 years.
- (H) Dentist's technician, 48 years.
- (I) Civil servant, 46 years.
- (J) Minister for Work, Women, Health and Social Security, Saxony Anhalt, 55 years.
- (K) Pensioner, 64 years.
- (L) Unemployed, 54 years.
- (M) ABM employee with ROSA (women's job agency), 43 years.
- (N) Unemployed factory worker, 50 years.
- (O) Ex-State Secretary for Women's Politics, Saxony Anhalt, Unemployed, 54 years.
- (P) Expert interview.
- (Q) Unemployed engineer, 40 years.
- (R) Unemployed, 52 years.

Notes

1. See, for example, R. Harding and W. Paterson (eds.), *The Future of the German Economy. An End to the Miracle?* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000). See also the Hartz Review documentation and the introduction of (some of) its recommendations, which, together with other issues such as pension and health reforms, have already negatively (for the government) influenced elections in 2004.

2. K. Andruschow, S. Frister, R. Mersmann and G. Winkler, 'Arbeitsmarkt und Bildung', in G. Winkler (ed.), *Sozialreport 1995* (Berlin: GAM MEDIA, 1995), pp.81-169, here p.96.

3. J. Fuchs and B. Weber, 'Frauen in Ostdeutschland, Erwerbsbeteiligung weiterhin hoch', *IAB Kurzbericht* 4, 2 Feb. 2004.

4. Bundesanstalt für Arbeit, Arbeitsmarkt 2001, *Amtliche Nachrichten der Bundesanstalt für Arbeit*, 2002, 50. Jahrgang, Sondernummer, 17 Juni (2002). See also C. Klenner, 'Geschlechtergleichheit in Deutschland?', *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte* 33-34 (2002), pp.17-28, here p.18; <http://www.arbeitsamt.de>; <http://www.destatis.de>; and Ute Klammer *et al.*, *WSI FrauenDatenReport* (Berlin: edition sigma, 2000).

5. *Der Spiegel*, 29 (2002), p.S.96 ff.

6. R. Alsop, 'Women, Work and the Wende. Regional and Sectoral Perspectives, Political and Individual Responses', in E. Boa and J. Wharton (eds.), *Women and the Wende* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1994), p.30.

7. Seasonally adjusted unemployment rates for January 2004 show Germany and Greece to have the third highest rate of 9.2 per cent, with only France (9.5 per cent) and Spain (11.2 per cent) having higher rates. See:
<http://www.ibeurope.com/Database/Resources/R041unemp.htm> (accessed 7/3/04).

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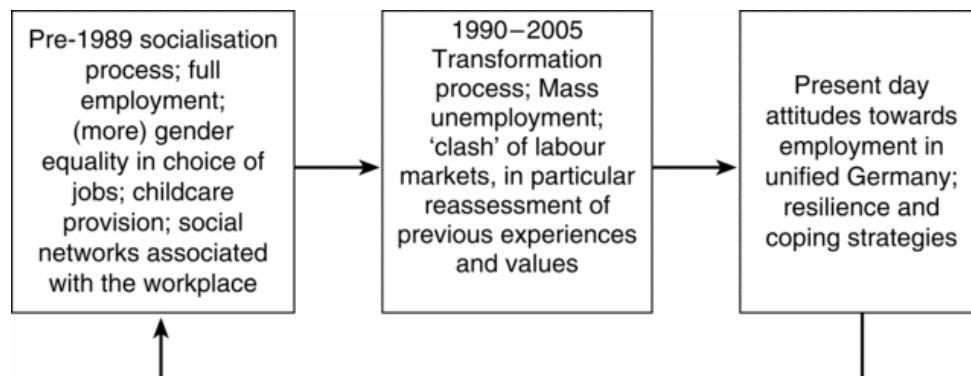
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List of Figures



[\[Enlarge Image\]](#)

Figure 1. REFLEXIVE ATTITUDE FORMATION AMONG EAST GERMAN WOMEN

List of Tables

UNEMPLOYMENT RATES IN GERMANY Table 1

1991 1992 1993 1994 1995 1996 1997 1998 Jan 02 Jan 03 Jan 04

Sources: 1991-98 WSI FrauenDatenReport, CD-Rom © edition sigma. 2002-04 Statistisches Bundesamt Deutschland, <http://www.destatis.de>.